

The Storymancer

Reading & Discussion Guide

A companion resource for readers, parents, teachers, librarians, and book clubs

By Robert Carnes · Blue Ink Press, 2025

🧭 How to Use This Guide

Each chapter has questions to check what you remember and questions to spark great conversations. Use them at bedtime, in the car, at the dinner table, or in class!

📝 = **Reading Check** 💬 = **Let's Talk About It**

CH 1 Lobbying For An Adventure

Sofia walks through the revolving door and into Kingdom & Company.

📝 Reading Check

1. Where is Sofia supposed to be this morning instead of the office building?
2. What does Sofia nearly slip on in the lobby?
3. What is the janitor's name (look at his uniform)?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The narrator says, "Even a boring lobby can be hiding something exciting within." Where have you found something surprising in an ordinary place?
- 🌟 What do you predict Sofia will find inside Kingdom & Company? Were you right?

CH 2 An Unwelcome Reception

Sofia meets the receptionist and asks for a job.

📝 Reading Check

1. What must Sofia have to enter Kingdom & Company?
2. What does Sofia pull out of her backpack to tell a story?
3. What is surprising about the bottom half of the receptionist?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The receptionist says she has never heard a real story before. What surprised you most about that?
- 🌟 Have you ever tried a creative way to solve a problem when the normal way wasn't working?

CH 3 The Accidental Interview

Sofia meets Berne the squire and gets an unexpected job interview.

📝 Reading Check

1. What does Sofia carry in her backpack to write things down?
2. Who was Sir Wellington actually expecting to interview?
3. What does the receptionist's species turn out to be called?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Sofia writes notes in her notebook so she can remember things. How do you remember important stuff?
- 🌟 Sir Wellington keeps getting Berne's name wrong. How do you think that makes Berne feel?

CH 4 Working Day and Knight

Sir Wellington gives Sofia something to help her on her journey.

📝 Reading Check

1. What college is Sir Wellington's diploma from?
2. What does Sir Wellington write for Sofia to take with her?
3. What does Sir Wellington say he sends Berne on to "build character"?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Sir Wellington's office has a second-place bowling trophy and family photos in armor. What do those little details tell you about who he is?
- 🌟 Sofia says she'll take any job at all. Would you call that brave, risky, or something else?

CH 5 Madness in the Mailroom

Sofia discovers the chaotic mailroom full of gnomes, leprechauns, and pixies.

📝 Reading Check

1. What three types of creatures work in the mailroom?
2. What do the mailroom workers do instead of sorting the mail?
3. What happens when Sofia tries to mail Sir Wellington's letter?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 What details make the mailroom feel so wild and out of control?
- 🌟 Sofia tried to do something simple — mail a letter — and it went completely sideways. What's the funniest thing that went wrong?

CH 6 Lost in the Wherehouse

Sofia gets trapped in a box and discovers a vast warehouse.

📝 Reading Check

1. How does Sofia end up trapped inside a cardboard box?
2. What are the warehouse workers wearing on their heads?
3. Why is the "Wherehouse" name a play on words?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Sofia lets her emotions show by banging on the box — something the narrator says she rarely does. Why do you think she usually hides her feelings?
- 🌟 What was your favorite detail about the Wherehouse? What made it memorable?

CH 7 A Peasant Surprise

Sofia faces wolves and meets the sales peasants in their cubicle village.

📝 Reading Check

1. What do the Wherehouse workers Trip, Dili, and Cardiff turn into?
2. What does Sofia throw at the wolves to try to slow them down?
3. Who does Sofia meet after she escapes the wolves?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Rome says he doesn't work hard because he's "meant for more." If you were Sofia, what would you say to him?
- 🌟 Sofia says her dad's sandwich has an ingredient she can't add herself: love. What does that tell you about her family?

CH 8 Climbing the Corporate Ladder

Sofia tells a story about a cruel princess, then climbs a very tall ladder.

📝 Reading Check

1. What is the story-within-the-story about in this chapter?
2. What does Sofia have to climb to reach the manager's office?
3. What is the manager's name, and what is she doing when Sofia arrives?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The story Sofia tells is about a cruel princess. What parts of it remind you of things happening in the real Kingdom?
- 🌟 Sofia compares being called to the manager's office to being sent to the principal's office. Which one sounds scarier to you?

CH 9 Printing a Prophecy

Ms. Mandu reveals the Kingdom's big secret and sends Sofia on a new mission.

📝 Reading Check

1. What is threatening the entire Kingdom, according to Ms. Mandu?
2. What surprising family connection does Rome have to Ms. Mandu?
3. Who does Mandu send Sofia to find?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Ms. Mandu acts super scary, but she admits it's mostly a show. What was your first hint that she wasn't actually that mean?
- 🌟 Mandu says it's better for people to fear "someone they know rather than an uncertain future." Do you agree, or would you rather just know the truth?

CH 10 Research & Development & Dragons

Sofia meets Oslo, the nervous alchemist who works in a broom closet.

📝 Reading Check

1. What was Oslo's office before it was an office?
2. What object does Oslo need Sofia to retrieve for him?
3. How does Sofia travel to the Jungle Gym realm?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Oslo is brilliant but terrified of almost everything. Name someone — real or fictional — who is smart but also scared sometimes.
- 🌟 Sofia agrees to a dangerous mission for someone she just met. Would you have said yes? Why or why not?

CH 11 Welcome to the Jungle Gym

Sofia enters the barbarian realm and faces the horse lords on treadmills.

📝 Reading Check

1. What are the barbarian warriors riding their horses on?
2. What kind of helmets do the horse lords wear for safety?
3. What does Sofia say that suddenly makes the riders stop laughing?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The horse lords make fun of Oslo behind his back. What's the difference between teasing a friend and bullying someone who's not there?
- 🌟 Sofia stands up for Oslo to the horse lords. When is a time you stood up for someone?

CH 12 The Magivator

Sofia returns the golden keycard and discovers the magical elevator.

📝 Reading Check

1. Who does Sofia crash into when she comes out of the mail chute?
2. What is Oslo being pressured to buy in the hallway?
3. What does Sofia call the "Magical Transportation Room"?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The janitor keeps showing up wherever Sofia goes. Who do you think he really is? What clues have you noticed?
- 🌟 Oslo is very proud of his invention, even though it's basically an elevator. Have you ever been really proud of something other people thought was ordinary?

CH 13 Mind the Gold

Sofia and Oslo visit the dwarves in accounting and meet Oslo's brother Cope.

📝 Reading Check

1. What do the dwarves do at Kingdom & Company?
2. What is Oslo's brother Copenhagen's nickname?
3. What does Sofia find in the Kingdom Treasury?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 What was the funniest moment in the dwarf mines? Did any of the accounting jokes make you laugh (or groan)?
- 🌟 Cope gives Sofia a gold coin and says it's "worth more than you think." What do you think he means?

CH 14 Technically Magical

Sofia enters the wizard realm of "Eye Tea" and meets Oslo's brother Sink.

📝 Reading Check

1. What do the wizards drink to stay awake?
2. What do the wizards wear instead of pointy hats?
3. What is Sink's real name?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The wizards wear bathrobes, flip-flops, and noise-canceling headphones. How is that different from wizards in other books you've read?
- 🌟 Technology and magic seem almost the same in this kingdom. Name something in real life that feels like magic to you.

CH 15 An Uncreative Meeting

Sofia hides in the peaceful Marketing realm and reveals something about her dad.

📝 Reading Check

1. Why doesn't Princess Paris visit the Marketing realm?
2. What ancient job title are the Marketing monks most similar to?
3. Where did Sofia's storytelling glasses originally come from?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Sofia says she doesn't read with her dad anymore because "that's for little kids." If you could tell Sofia one thing about that, what would it be?
- 🌟 The glasses don't have real lenses, but Sofia keeps them anyway. Do you have an object that's important to you even though it doesn't "do" anything?

CH 16 Breaking the Law

Sofia and Oslo visit the fancy (and confusing) Legal realm.

📝 Reading Check

1. Why do you have to pay to visit the Legal realm?
2. What kind of creature is the lawyer they meet?
3. What does Oslo use to pay for their visit?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The lawyer talks in long, confusing sentences that even Sofia can't follow. What's the most confusing thing an adult has ever said to you?
- 🌟 The Legal realm is the fanciest place in the whole Kingdom — leather chairs, fireplaces, Persian rugs. Why do you think the lawyers get the nicest office?

CH 17 Broken in the Break Room

The trolls capture Sofia and Oslo and bring them to the Break Room.

📝 Reading Check

1. Why do the trolls' words look funny on the page?
2. Where do the trolls take Sofia and Oslo?
3. What is the "Break Room" actually used for?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Sofia feels guilty because her choices put Oslo in danger. If you were Oslo, would you be angry at her or understand?
- 🌟 The trolls follow Princess Paris's orders without questioning them. Why is it dangerous to follow orders without thinking?

CH 18 A Nearly Narrow Escape

Sofia and Oslo escape and learn about Otto the Prophet.

📝 Reading Check

1. Who is Otto?
2. Why are the kingdom's prophecies usually confusing?
3. Where is Otto rumored to be hiding?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Have you ever seen two people read the same message and disagree about what it meant? Why does that happen?
- 🌟 Sofia isn't sure she trusts Otto, even though everyone else seems to. What would you want to know about Otto before believing his prophecies?

CH 19 In the Labyrinth of Inhuman Resources

Sofia navigates a dark maze alone, faces a sphinx, and answers three riddles.

📝 Reading Check

1. What does Sofia use as a light source in the dark maze?
2. What happens to Sofia's storytelling glasses inside her backpack?
3. How does Sofia answer the sphinx's riddles when she gets stuck?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The narrator says "the scariest thing is uncertainty." Do you agree? What scares you more — something specific or not knowing what's coming?
- 🌟 Sofia's notebook saves her during the riddles. What's the most useful thing you've ever written down?

CH 20 The Water Cooler of Knowledge

Sofia finds a beautiful hidden fountain and has an honest talk with the janitor.

📝 Reading Check

1. What rule does the janitor tell Sofia about the water cooler?
2. What does Sofia fill with water from the cooler?
3. What advice did the sphinx give Sofia about the water?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The janitor asks Sofia if she still wants to work at Kingdom & Company. Her answer has changed from the beginning. How?
- 🌟 Sofia talks about invisible walls that can make people feel stuck. Have you ever felt "stuck" by a rule or a worry? What was it?

CH 21 Which Witch is Which?

Sofia arrives in the Throne Room and meets three mysterious secretary witches.

📝 Reading Check

1. How many witches sit at the circular desk?
2. What are the three witches' names?
3. Who does Sofia unexpectedly run into again near the Board Room?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 The three witches look like the same woman at three different ages. What was the creepiest or coolest detail about them?
- 🌟 Sofia has come a very long way since the lobby. How has she changed from the beginning of the story?

CH 22 A Bored Meeting

Sofia meets the elven Board of Directors and saves the chairman with her water.

📝 Reading Check

1. What is wrong with the board chairman, Tunis?
2. What does Sofia give him that makes him feel better?
3. What does Tunis hand to Sofia at the end of the meeting?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Why do you think the board missed such an obvious problem right in front of them?
- 🌟 Sofia helps the chairman without being asked. What's a time you noticed someone needed help before they said anything?

CH 23 In the Throne Office

The witches perform a strange ritual, and Sofia finally meets Mr. King.

📝 Reading Check

1. What does the business card change to say after the witches throw it in the cauldron?
2. Where had Sofia seen Mr. King before this day?
3. What does Sofia tell Mr. King about why she's really here?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Mr. King asks Sofia three questions at once without letting her answer. How would you feel if someone did that to you?
- 🌟 Sofia started the day wanting a job. By this point, what does she actually care about most?

CH 24 Up to the Dungeons

Sofia's dad is revealed, and together they face the dragon.

📝 Reading Check

1. Who turns out to be Sofia's dad?
2. Why did Sofia want to get a job in the first place?
3. What does Sofia's dad say is the reason he loves his janitor job?

💬 Let's Talk About It

- 💭 Sofia admits she was embarrassed by her dad's job. Have you ever felt embarrassed about something and then realized it wasn't worth it?
- 🌟 What do you think Sofia's dad means when he says the world is "broken"? What are small ways people can help make things better?

CH 25 Normally Ever After

Sofia and Paris have an honest conversation, and the story comes full circle.

📝 Reading Check

1️⃣ Why was Princess Paris actually being mean to Sofia?

2️⃣ What does Paris wish she could have more of with her dad?

3️⃣ What does Sofia ask her dad to do at the very end of the book?

💬 Let's Talk About It

💭 Paris says, "It's a lot easier to hurt someone else than deal with how I feel." Why do people sometimes act that way? What could they do instead?

🌟 The very last line is Sofia's dad beginning to tell a story. If you could add one more sentence to the book, what would it be?

⭐ Bonus Challenge

The characters' names in this book aren't random. There's a hidden pattern.

🔍 Can You Crack It?

1️⃣ Look at Sofia's last name: **Canberra**. Now look it up on a map. Notice anything?

2️⃣ Try the same thing with Oslo, Paris, Wellington, and Berne. See a pattern yet?

3️⃣ Some names are sneakier than others. What's hiding inside **Mandu**, **War Saw**, and **Kyroh**?

✨ "Stories carry power no matter how they're told." ✨

Thank you for reading **The Storymancer**!

If you enjoyed this guide, share it with a friend, teacher, or librarian.

Learn more at **jamrobcar.com**

ISBN: 978-1-948449-27-4 · Blue Ink Press, 2025